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NORWAY  
AND THE WAR

BY  
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AMONGST the victims of German aggression, Norway has gained an honourable pre-eminence for the persistence, courage and skill of the resistance which her people continue to offer to the enemy and for the fewness of those who have, willingly or otherwise, collaborated with Germany. It is unfortunate in this respect that the name of Quisling should have gained such notoriety. Mr. Gathorne-Hardy points out that treachery played a much smaller part than surprise and confusion in securing German success, and that the Norwegians have received insufficient credit for the toughness of their resistance. In this Pamphlet he analyses the geographical and historical factors which have developed to an almost unparalleled degree individualism, independence and love of liberty in the Norwegian people; gives a brief account of their political and economic development, and explains their foreign policy in the present century. He makes an interesting comparison between the Baltic power Sweden and the Atlantic power Norway, and emphasizes the unique importance of the sea to the Norwegians, whose remote valleys are often inaccessible to one another by land, but to whom the sea is a natural element, and whose merchant navy is among the most important in the world. He suggests that their present experiences may lead Norwegians, after the war, to seek security in closer association with the maritime power of the British Empire and the U.S.A. rather than with any Continental bloc or with a purely Scandinavian grouping.

Mr. Gathorne-Hardy's knowledge of Norway extends over forty years, and he is the author of a standard book on Norway in the Modern World Series. He is also the author of *A Short History of International Affairs, 1920-1938*, published under the auspices of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, of which he was for several years the honorary secretary, and of Oxford Pamphlet No. 6, *The Fourteen Points and the Treaty of Versailles*.

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## NORWAY AND THE WAR

### Physical Characteristics of Norway

THE Norwegian people are to a remarkable extent the logical product of their geographical environment and the physical peculiarities of their country. As one of their archæologists—Professor A. W. Brøgger—has expressed it: "From the very first moment when human beings came to Norway, the natural conditions of the country were bound to turn them into Norwegians." These conditions, from the earliest times, have dictated the distribution and density of the population, prescribed its way of life, influenced its political and economic development, and given to the national character its peculiar features, both of strength and weakness.

About three-quarters of the land area is occupied by the barren plateaus of the high fjeld and other almost equally inhospitable features. The inhabited and habitable regions, broadly speaking, are limited to the sea coast, and to deep-cut, walled-in valleys. Along these valleys run, and have always run, practically all the main lines of communication. Two of these natural highways were brought into special prominence in the course of the military operations of 1940. One is actually continuous from the North Sea to the Oslo fjord, the other very nearly so. From one end of Lesjeskogen lake the Rauma river runs north-west through Romsdal into the Molde fjord near Andalsnes; from the other end the Laagen flows south-east down Gudbrandsdal to the Mjøsen lake, whence it emerges under a different name to join the Glommen, which debouches near the entrance of the Oslo fjord. The whole of Norway to the south-west of this cleft is, I suppose, by definition an island, being completely surrounded by water. The second of these routes

follows the Glommen itself through Østerdal, and from its source almost immediately reaches the head-waters of the Gula, which flows through Guldal to Trondheim. Such convenient continuity is, however, exceptional. For the most part, the land communication between one district and another is far more complicated, and many valleys are practically cut off from their nearest neighbours, except by sea.

The actual distances separating some parts of Norway from others are also an important consideration. The length of the country is altogether disproportionate to its area, which is not much larger than that of the British Isles (124,500 sq. miles as against 120,800). The part of Norway north of the head of the Trondheim fjord is in breadth little more than a coastal strip, yet it extends over more than seven degrees of latitude, which is equivalent to the difference between Southampton and Genoa. A resident in Kristiansand, in the extreme south of Norway, is about as far from a compatriot in Hammerfest, in the north, as he is from Rome or Moscow.

The sea which washes the Norwegian coast has always been quite as important a topographical factor as the land, and has exerted an even profounder influence on the national development. The deeply channelled formation which characterizes the mainland is repeated in the territorial waters of Norway. Submerged valleys in the shape of narrow fjords penetrate to the heart of the country again and again throughout its length, in some instances to a depth of over 100 miles, producing a coast-line which, straightened out, would reach nearly half-way round the world. Separated from the mainland and from one another by an intricate network of narrow channels, a fringe of islands provides a nearly continuous sheltered route along practically the whole western face of the country.

In spite of the fact that the greater part of the coast-line lies as far north as Greenland or Baffin Land, and that nearly half of it is within the Arctic Circle, the whole of these waters, and the ports situated upon them, are kept by warm currents ice-free throughout the year. It is therefore appropriate that the land should have derived its name from this natural line of communication—the Northern Way, since it was the use of the sea which gave to Norway its late and gradual realization of a national unity. It is in fact a peculiarity of Norway that the land divides and the sea unites: this element has therefore been regarded, from the earliest times, not as a barrier but as a highway. Trained to intimate familiarity with it from the dawn of their civilization, it is not surprising that Norwegians should have made their first appearance on the stage of history as a formidable maritime race. The development of overseas communications may indeed be traced to a period long antecedent to the Viking age. There is evidence of traffic with the British Isles at least as far back as the Bronze Age, and the reports of Pytheas of Marseilles indicate that the route from Norway to the Shetland Isles must have been known in the fourth century B.C.

### Resources : (a) The Sea

Until the beginning of the present century, the livelihood of the people was for the most part provided by the natural resources of the country, including the sea which washes its coasts. Maritime activities have naturally played the most important part. The principal towns, and indeed the bulk of the population, are to be found upon the coast, while the inland valleys in which the rest of the nation live also debouch upon the sea. It is therefore not surprising that, from a world standpoint, Norway derives its special import-

ance from its shipping industry. In the Viking age, Norwegians were the pioneers of transoceanic as opposed to coastwise navigation, and they long anticipated Columbus in the discovery of the Western Hemisphere. In spite, however, of her possession of ships and seamen, Norway was badly situated and equipped for a trading centre, and this fact, combined with other circumstances, enabled her maritime importance to be eclipsed, first by the German Hansa, and later by the Dutch. Nevertheless, even during these periods, the natural affinity of the people for the sea continued, and Norwegians, even though employed under a foreign flag, still made a notable contribution to the ranks of the world's seamen. During the union between Norway and Denmark, the outstanding figures in the Danish navy were Norwegians, while the Dutch merchant service in the seventeenth century was also largely manned by sailors from Norway.

The rise of the modern Norwegian merchant fleet, however, dates from the more or less general abandonment of the earlier 'flag-discrimination' policy by the nations of the world, and especially from the repeal of the British Navigation Act in 1849. From that time shipping in Norway has advanced, almost steadily, to a position altogether unique in relation to the size of her population. At the outset of the present war, the Norwegian merchant fleet was the fourth largest in the world, being surpassed only by Great Britain, the United States, and Japan. It totalled more than 4,000,000 tons, and in the proportion of tonnage to the head of population it stood easily first.<sup>1</sup> It held an impressive share of the tramp trade of the world, and was particularly rich in oil-tankers, a fact which makes its transfer to the service of Great Britain and her allies in the present war a matter of peculiar importance.

The sea has also provided Norway with two more of her most lucrative sources of revenue—her fishing and whaling industries. The most important fisheries are in the Lofoten Islands and northern Norway; whaling has been from ancient times an activity in which Norwegians have been prominent, and is one in which they have now achieved something approaching a monopoly, though this industry is now mainly carried on in distant seas, particularly the Antarctic. Apart from food supplies, Norwegian fisheries and whalers produce large quantities of valuable oils and fats, which become of special importance in war-time conditions.

### Resources : (b) The Land

In spite of the limited area suitable for cultivation, farming has also been an activity in which a large proportion of the population has always engaged. Even at the present time, about 30 per cent. of the population are farmers, while during the greater part of Norwegian history agriculture was the staple occupation of the vast majority of the population. Most of the farms are now freehold. Farms with a cultivable area of more than 25 acres are, however, extremely rare, and the average is not more than about  $9\frac{1}{2}$  acres. In spite, therefore, of the large proportion of the population engaged in agriculture, this activity is not important from the point of view of international trade. The livestock and dairy produce are mainly home-consumed, and the crops raised are mostly used to feed the cattle. Many Norwegian farms, however, include forest land, the owners of which have a direct interest in forestry. The timber of Norway has always been an important article of export, though at the present day the secondary products—pulp, cellulose, and paper—have become even more

important than the timber itself. On the coast, farmers are also frequently concerned in the fishing industry.

The mineral resources of the country are by no means negligible, and mining is a Norwegian industry of respectable age, the silver mines of Kongsberg and the copper mines of Röros having been in existence since the seventeenth century. The mineral products of the country, however, acquire special importance in time of war, when such things as pyrites, copper, molybdenum and nickel, all of which occur, are particularly sought after. The important iron deposits of Sydvaranger, in the extreme north, which began to be exploited early in the present century, had a rather chequered history during the period between the present war and the last, but are unlikely to become neglected in present circumstances.

Since about the beginning of the present century, the whole economic life of the country has been profoundly affected by an industrial development which, in Norway, was very late in arising. Norway was unable to play an important part in industrial manufacture so long as this was dependent upon coal, in which she is entirely deficient, though since 1920 she has enjoyed the sovereignty over Spitzbergen (Svalbard), which contains important deposits of this mineral. On the other hand, Norway is peculiarly rich in sources of water-power, which, originally exploited in a modest way to work sawmills, etc., acquired a totally new value with the development of electricity. Electrical energy produced by the harnessing of waterfalls has already gone far to revolutionize life in Norway, and though the country has suffered a good deal from the disturbances occasioned by so sudden a change in the traditional habits of the people, numbers of new industries have been born of the change, which are of value in the present and of even

greater promise in the future. The suddenness and lateness of the industrial revolution in Norway have, however, had important reactions on the relations between capital and labour.

### The People

The population, even at the present day, numbers under 3,000,000, or less than the figure accommodated by the West Riding of Yorkshire. As late as the beginning of the nineteenth century it was no more than 977,000. So sparse a population, distributed over great distances, and strung out along narrow and mutually inaccessible clefts, at once suggests a nation wherein the individual is paramount, rather than the community. This conclusion turns out to be correct. A passion for individual liberty and independence is, and has always been, the dominant characteristic of the Norwegian people. The typical Norwegian leads an isolated life, and this form of existence has endowed him, as it did Robinson Crusoe and for the same reason, with remarkable personal qualities of self-reliance, resourcefulness, and versatility. Even if he lives in a town, or has benefited by recent improvements in means of communication, he is likely to have inherited these gifts from a long line of less gregarious ancestors. But, above all, he treasures jealously his individual liberty—his right to lead his own life, and to think his own thoughts, in his own way, independent of external control or dictation.

Even the solitary uniting influence of the Norwegian's environment—the sea—has not served to modify, but has rather encouraged, this pronounced individualism. For it has been not only a way of communication, but a way of escape, of which his countrymen, when threatened with an unwelcome control, have made conspicuous use throughout their

history. The colonization of Iceland (in the ninth century) was carried out by men who took to their ships and sailed abroad rather than submit to the sovereignty of Harald Fairhair, and Norse settlements in the Faroes, the Orkneys and Shetlands, and the Scottish Hebrides were stimulated by the same desire for freedom from interference. At a later date, the same way of escape was utilized by Norwegian sailors to achieve freedom from the oppressive rule of the Danish administrators of their country in the seventeenth century. 'The best seamen belonging to the King of Denmark,' says an English writer in 1692, 'are the Norwegians; but most of these are in the service of the Dutch, and have their families established in Holland; from whence it is scarce likely they will ever return home, unless the Dutch use them worse, or the Danes better.' The Norwegian, in fact, dearly as he loves his beautiful country, has always shown that he prefers exile to the loss of his cherished personal independence.

The natural conditions, however, which have produced the desirable qualities of independence and versatility, have been equally responsible for some less admirable results. The obstacles which they present to national unity are evident. The nation was indeed a late and as it were an artificial growth; even after its development was superficially complete, it was only on the rarest occasions found possible to provide a focus of united resistance to external domination, and traces of local cleavage persist even at the present time. Different regions frequently display striking differences of outlook and sympathy: in particular, there is a still imperfectly bridged gulf between the urban and rural communities. They do not even speak an identical language, though the two forms of speech current in town and country are

being increasingly approximated, both as a natural development and as the result of deliberate legislative action.

### The Danish Union

Partly as a result of this lack of national cohesion, the insistence on individual freedom which has characterized the people has not given to Norway a proportionate measure of *political* independence. From the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, the kingdom of Norway was united to that of Denmark, under conditions amounting to virtual subordination, and from 1814 to 1905 the independence of Norway was limited by the conditions of her union with Sweden. For experience of sovereign independence, the country has to look either to a remote or a very recent page of her history.

During the period of Danish rule, administrative officials and the clergy were drawn predominantly from Denmark, which was also the seat of all higher education. Danish became the official and cultural language, with results which persisted long after the connexion between the two countries was severed, and indeed are not entirely eradicated at the present day. The native aristocracy became merged indistinguishably in the mass of the population. Nevertheless, the Danish nobility failed to reduce the people of Norway to the deplorable condition of semi-servitude to which the peasantry of Denmark were subjected. A sixteenth-century writer calls the Norwegians 'a hard, refractory, obstinate and riotous, turbulent, rebellious and bloodthirsty people,' by which accumulation of epithets he expresses a Danish recognition of the fact that their resolute defence of their individual liberties remained impregnable.

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Indeed, in comparison with the lot of their brethren

across the Skager Rak, the freedom of the Norwegian 'bonde'<sup>1</sup> was so conspicuous that the conception of Norway as *par excellence* the land of liberty is continually stressed in contemporary literature.

'Thou art in Paradise, and Eden's garden tillest,  
Where grief is buried deep beneath the soil thou turnest;  
Of Adam ere his fall the blissful place thou fillest,  
While freedom's helm and shield in honoured wage thou  
earnest.'

In such terms of hyperbole does a contemporary of Holberg, about 1720, address the Norwegian farmer. This evidence is the more remarkable since the author, Povel Juel, was fully conscious of the *political* subjection of his country, and was ultimately beheaded for promoting a plot to throw off the Danish yoke. The same note emphasizing *individual* freedom is constantly repeated by eighteenth century Norwegian versifiers, during the worst period of Danish absolutism. The fact was that the same natural conditions which made Norway incapable of united resistance made it at the same time almost impossible to control individuals. 'Frederik may be King in Denmark, but I am King in Bjerkeim,' boasted the Norwegian 'bonde,' Trond Lauperak, in 1762.

### The Swedish Union, 1814-1905

Though the connexion between Denmark and Norway nominally lasted until 1814, it was really broken some years earlier, by circumstances which disclosed a vital discrepancy of national interest between the two countries. As the late Foreign Minister of the Norwegian Government, Dr. Koht, has expressed it: 'When Denmark finally, in 1807,

<sup>1</sup> An untranslatable word, which is not synonymous with 'peasant' — the conventional rendering. Approximately = 'yeoman farmer,' but includes more aristocratic elements.

was forced to abandon her neutrality, and chose to side with France, it was a necessary consequence that she must lose Norway. For the strongest Norwegian interests drew this country to the English side.' From this date, practically all direct connexion between Denmark and Norway was severed by the British blockade, and the government of the latter country had to be entrusted to a Regency Commission. But the actual breach occurred when, on January 14, 1814, the King of Denmark renounced, in the Treaty of Kiel, his sovereignty over Norway in favour of the King of Sweden. The Norwegian people asserted the right to settle their own destinies, and in pursuance of this convened a representative Assembly at Eidsvoll, which, in defiance of Sweden, prepared the independent democratic constitution which Norway has since enjoyed, and adopted an alternative candidate for the throne. In view, however, of the support given to the Swedish claim by all the great Powers of Europe, it was impossible for the people of Norway to escape altogether from the union with Sweden, which, indeed, was favoured by a considerable party within the Eidsvoll Assembly itself. They succeeded, however, in reducing it, under the Convention of Moss, to a personal union under a common King, retaining the independent political organization provided for in the Eidsvoll constitution.

There was thus, from the first, a state of tension created by the divergent aspirations of the two parties to the agreement. Sweden continued to hope and work for an ultimate solution more nearly approximating to that 'annexation of the Kingdom of Norway as an integral part of the Kingdom of Sweden' of which the treaties concluded with the great Powers had spoken; she continued instinctively to regard the Treaty of Kiel, rather than the Convention of Moss,

as the operative document in the case. But every move taken or suspected, which had as its object a more intimate union, excited the obdurate resistance of the Norwegian people. Apart from this cause of friction, the union was constantly subjected to strain by the difference between the external interests of the two countries. It was an anomaly of the situation that Norway, with the predominant overseas interests created by her great merchant fleet and her world-wide trade connexions, had no say in matters of external policy. She had not even separate consuls to look after her interests abroad. Besides this, the line of thought which had suggested union between the two nations was thoroughly superficial. Norway is an Atlantic, Sweden a Baltic country, and the peoples of the two kingdoms are actually separated by physical obstacles, across which run remarkably few lines of communication. As Dr. Koht has pointed out, moreover, Sweden was thinking in terms of power and strategic unity of control, while the interest of Norway was in independence and democratic self-government. For these reasons, the union remained an uneasy partnership, with increasing tension, until its final dissolution in 1905.

### Norwegian Democracy

A characteristic of the nation which is of special importance, and which may be traced to the same natural causes which have produced other salient Norwegian traits, is its remarkable qualification for popular self-government. In modern Norway, with its marked absence of class distinctions and high standard of general education, this characteristic is indeed generally recognized. It is not, however, so fully appreciated that in the earliest stages of Norwegian history the conditions of life led to the adoption

of a considerable element of democracy. In primitive communities, it is war which begets the king and the aristocracy, but the settlement of the Norwegian valleys was not the work of military conquerors, but was a gradual process of expansion from the scattered estates of a few families, whose occupation of their farms ran back into immemorial antiquity, and which were more or less in a condition of social equality. The *odal*<sup>1</sup> system of inheritance to land, which originated and still persists in Norway, made the tenure of these families practically inviolable. In such a community, the function of the local kings and chieftains was mainly limited to the military defence of the territory, and, though marked differences of social standing eventually developed, the principal legislative, administrative, and judicial business of the districts was conducted in periodical 'things' or public meetings, in which all the free population took part on a theoretically equal footing.

The viking age, which appears to give Norway a singularly aggressive stamp, represents really the work of a minority, the overflow from a country incapable of supporting a large population, and, though raids of a similar kind no doubt took place in earlier times between district and district, these must have been mainly confined to the coast, while the farmers of the inaccessible interior were mostly able to lead their lives comparatively undisturbed. Hence kings and the militant aristocracy did not acquire sufficient importance to enable them to enjoy an unchallenged authority. The idea that the person of a king is inviolable, or that he can do no wrong, is so

<sup>1</sup> A system which vests the succession to landed property in the family rather than the individual, and gives to members of the family rights of pre-emption and redemption in the event of sale. This ancient system is specially preserved by § 107 of the Norwegian constitution.

foreign to the notions embodied in the oldest Norwegian laws that we find it, on the contrary, enjoined as a duty to kill or expel a monarch who infringes the personal rights of his subjects. Except for a comparatively short period of less than two centuries, from the date when the work of national consolidation was completed by King Sverre and his successors to the time when the crown passed into foreign hands, the power of the community of free bönder was always formidable and generally decisive during the time of Norway's sovereign independence.

As to the modern epoch, which begins with the enactment of the present constitution, on May 17, 1814, the very fact that the Danish rule, in the intervening period, had so largely superseded the local leaders with foreign officials not only made democracy almost the only conceivable system of government, but actually rendered the population unusually capable of the tasks of self-government. Though the official class in the towns attempted for a time to maintain its position, the bulk of the country population formed a remarkably homogeneous community, free from marked class distinctions, which nevertheless held latent within it that element with capacity for leadership which had been ousted from its natural share in administration by the rule of foreign officials.

The constitution drawn up at Eidsvoll in 1814, which remains the fundamental law of the Norwegian State, was, moreover, profoundly influenced by that of the United States of America, and by the ideas of the French Revolution. Hence, in spite of the temporary survival of officials of the old school, it was so profoundly democratic in spirit that the course was irrevocably set.

‘Government of the people, by the people, for the people’ has indeed not been practised so long, so

thoroughly, and so continuously in any other part of Europe. The parliamentary system laid down in the constitution is virtually single-chamber government, since the Lagting, the nearest approach to an Upper House, is actually a committee elected by the Storting from its own members. The royal veto on its legislation ceased to be operative, under the constitution of 1814, if a measure was passed unaltered by three successive Stortings. The rights and liberties of individuals are most jealously safeguarded by the constitution, which also provides expressly for the liberty of the press, and lays down that 'everyone shall be free to speak his mind frankly on the administration of the State and any other subject whatever.'

### External Relations : (a) Scandinavia

In spite of the somewhat unfortunate experience of Norway during her periods of association with her two sister nations, it was natural that the idea of some degree of Scandinavian fellowship should persist. The three countries enjoy such a geographical remoteness from the main centres of European disturbance that, whether as friends or foes, they have been far more intimately concerned with one another than with the rest of the world, throughout the greater part of their history, and they share a similarity of race, tradition, and language calculated to inspire a sense of brotherhood. It is, moreover, particularly natural that three countries with a joint population of less than thirteen millions should consider the enhancement of their power and prestige which they might attain in combination. The weak point of this argument, however, lies in the fact that, from a military standpoint, even this combination is not strikingly formidable, while the extreme weakness of the individual units makes each one of them reluctant to face,

without further extraneous support, the responsibilities of war, when it comes to the point. War has therefore always disappointed the advocates of Scandinavianism. The failure of Norway and Sweden to support Denmark in 1864, which drove Ibsen into disgusted exile and inspired him to biting satire in *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*, was an early illustration of the weakness of Scandinavian unity. But war or the threat of it has on later occasions exhibited the same fundamental truth—that the co-operation of the northern peoples, while it can be close in time of peace, and especially under conditions of complete political independence, cannot be relied on to operate in times of war. In fact, its failure in these crises leads to regrettable recriminations and a feeling of bitterness which would not arise if the sense of kinship were less strongly felt, and the policy to be pursued were merely a matter of the joint and several interests of the parties.

In the war of 1914-18 there were numerous consultations between the three Scandinavian Governments, and in minor points their attitudes were harmonized to a considerable extent, yet it cannot be denied that Norway, Sweden, and Denmark faced problems of the struggle with considerable differences of outlook and policy.

During the earlier years of the post-war period, the ideal of Scandinavian co-operation was largely merged in the wider association of the League of Nations. In Fridtjof Nansen, Norway contributed to this body one of its most outstanding figures, and the policy of the Scandinavian States was based on faith in the system of collective security envisaged in the covenant. Within this comprehensive association, the Scandinavian group also enlarged its limits to include Belgium and the Netherlands, and this regional subdivision

within the broader framework of the League became generally known as 'the Oslo Powers,' from the place where the earliest of the conferences between the members of the group was held, in 1930. At a later date Finland also took part in these deliberations, and this country has, in recent years, come to be generally included in the term Scandinavia. The ties of interest uniting this wider grouping were, however, even more tenuous than those which had previously failed to co-ordinate the policy of Scandinavia proper.

Thus, when in May 1939 Denmark was persuaded to sign a non-aggression pact with Germany, her example was not followed by any of her Scandinavian associates. Though Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland drew up in concert, in May 1938, the rules to be applied in the event of war to implement the policy of neutrality to which they had reverted, Holland and Belgium, while adopting a similar policy, did so independently and in terms which were not identical. Though the Juridical Committee of the whole Oslo group met in November 1939, consultation between the strictly Scandinavian members was, after the outbreak of the present war, far more frequent and intimate.

The outbreak of the Russo-Finnish war at the end of November 1939 revealed even greater divergences of policy between Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. While all these countries showed a considerable measure of public sympathy with Finland, the extent to which each of them was prepared to lend practical assistance differed materially. In Sweden, nearly everything short of open and official belligerency was permitted and encouraged; in Norway, in spite of a strong popular agitation in favour of intervention, a much more strict policy of neutrality was followed by the Government, and open appeals for volunteers.

which were freely made in posters and in the press in Sweden, were officially forbidden; while Denmark, though sympathetic, was less directly interested. Finally, the attack by Germany upon Norway and Denmark on April 9, 1940, led to an almost complete breakdown of Scandinavian co-operation; Sweden retired into herself and preserved neutrality, Denmark capitulated without a struggle, and Norway alone resisted.

### (b) Relations with other Powers

Outside the Scandinavian group, the countries with which Norway has been most closely connected are Great Britain, Germany, Russia, and the United States. The connexion with the U.S.A. is due to the large number of Norwegian emigrants who, during the last century, have settled in that country. The interest felt in Russia has been due to less satisfactory reasons. There have been recurrent periods of nervousness, when Russia has been suspected of coveting an ice-free port in northern Norway, from which, during the years when she controlled Finland, she was only separated by some twenty miles. This situation led in 1855 to the so-called 'November Treaty' with Great Britain and France, by which Norway was guaranteed assistance against any attempt at Russian encroachment in this direction. The possible designs of Russia were also a topic of popular interest in Norway in the early years of the present century, when stories of Russian spies, mostly improbable, were everywhere in circulation. From the date of the separation from Sweden, however, these fears diminished, and they were for the time being removed, after the war of 1914-18, by the creation of an independent Finland; but the international aims of Bolshevism took their place as a bugbear, particu-

larly in capitalist circles, whose anxieties were increased by the growth of the Norwegian Labour Party, and the prevalence of serious industrial disputes which accompanied the rapid revolution then taking place in the economic life of the nation.

The foreign countries, however, which have been of the greatest importance to Norway have been Great Britain and Germany. These two countries, in recent years, have absorbed the largest share of the trade of Norway; Germany taking the first place as a source of Norwegian imports, and Great Britain standing first as a market for the exports of the country. Both countries have also for many years provided a large proportion of the visitors to Norway, though the German contingent has consisted for the most part of transitory tourists, who could not establish those intimate relations with the rural inhabitants which have resulted from the annual migration of numbers of British salmon-fishers, who made of many a Norwegian valley a permanent summer and autumn resort, where they became familiar figures. German penetration, in recent years, made progress in the towns, especially in Oslo and the south-eastern districts, but feeling along the western coast-line has been generally pro-British. The appeal of Germany has been strongest in scientific and technical circles: that of England has been more widespread, based on a marked similarity of outlook, the ties of the sea, and long association of many kinds. Until the war of 1914-18, however, the claims of both countries on Norwegian friendship did not seriously conflict; indeed, the dream of the great Norwegian poet-politician, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, was of a wide association of Teutonic peoples, in which both England and Germany were to be included.

### Norway and War : the Policy of Neutrality

On the outbreak of war in 1914 it was therefore natural, and almost a matter of course, that Norway should take her place among the neutrals. While the sympathies of the majority were on the side of Great Britain and her allies, Norway appeared to have no direct interest in the issues involved; indeed, her experience of foreign policy was at that time so short that there was very little intelligent interest taken in the affairs of Europe, and Norwegians were in the habit of congratulating themselves on occupying a detached situation, where the struggles of the Continent did not concern them. From a military and naval standpoint, the power of Norway was too slight to lead either belligerent to seek to enlist her as an ally, and, in the early stages of the war, the traditional conception of the rights of a neutral to carry on her normal trading activities with but few restrictions was still generally held. Up to the time when America entered the war, these rights had a zealous and powerful champion in the United States.

In spite of this, the conditions of modern warfare soon led to a revolutionary interpretation of the hitherto accepted doctrines of international law in relation to neutral rights, and the growing importance of blockade as a factor in the defeat of Germany led to negotiations as a result of which Norway, by the end of the war, though ostensibly still neutral, was actually rendering great services to the cause of the Allies, particularly through the contribution afforded by her merchant-fleet, which indeed suffered heavy casualties in the course of the campaign. Nevertheless, it proved possible for Norway to preserve her technical neutrality to the end, and even to derive considerable profit from the policy which she pursued.

It was therefore probably inevitable that, when the collapse of the sanctions policy in the Italo-Abyssinian conflict and the rapid darkening of the international outlook had destroyed the faith temporarily reposed in the alternative of collective security under the League of Nations, Norway should revert, as she did in 1938, to her traditional policy of neutrality.

The situation now facing the country, however, differed in important respects from that of 1914. Encroachment by belligerents on the traditional rights of neutrals was likely to begin at the stage which it only reached towards the end of the former war, and the small neutral Powers would no longer enjoy the powerful protection of the United States, since that country's neutrality policy was no longer based on a claim to trade freely with both belligerents, but on an avoidance of possible entanglements by keeping its ships clear of the theatres of war. The whole status of a neutral had, moreover, suffered in prestige from the fact that it involved, in most cases, a repudiation, however pardonable, of obligations solemnly assumed by the signatories of the League Covenant. Apart from these considerations, the whole of Hitler's progress during the years immediately preceding the resumption of hostilities had made it clear that no considerations of respect for international obligations would deter Germany from any steps which were deemed advantageous to her interests.

### **Norway and Nazism**

The fundamental difference was, however, that Norway was now in fact directly interested in the issue of the war. It will be clear from what has already been written that Norwegian thought, with its passionate insistence on individual liberty, free speech,

and parliamentary democracy, was diametrically opposed to the totalitarian ideology. Yet the present struggle is essentially ideological in character. A German victory would mean the triumph of a conception of life and world organization in which not only would all that Norway cherished be ruthlessly suppressed, but small States like Norway would survive, if at all, as mere helots subordinated to the interests of a German 'Herrenvolk.' The victory of Great Britain and her allies involved no such threat to the small Powers. Norway was therefore bound to hope and pray for such a result, and her neutrality had no spiritual basis.

Even in the days when German Nazism first asserted the claim—which, after a short interlude, it has now revived—to be Europe's bulwark against Bolshevism, and when the rapid rise of a Marxist Labour Party induced acute alarm in a certain section of the Norwegian population, the defence against Communism was generally felt to lie rather in reliance on democracy than in the adoption of an alternative form of dictatorship. More recently, the fears which might have encouraged sympathy with Nazism had been considerably reduced. When the Labour Party first came into power in Norway, in January 1928, the consequent panic in moneyed circles led to such a flight of capital that the Government was forced to relinquish office in about a fortnight. But since 1933 the Labour Party has been continuously in power, where it has shown, under the responsibilities of office, an unexpected moderation, which has established it increasingly in the confidence of the country. Finally, the German-Soviet agreement which immediately preceded the outbreak of war removed for a time the only hope which had so far commended Hitler to the sympathy of a limited circle in Norway, and the propaganda value

of the recent reversal of German policy towards Russia is weakened by the completely cynical lack of principle which it disclosed.

### ASHOKNAGAR, HYD Quisling

Sympathy for Hitler's régime had indeed been confined for the most part to the very young, and a small minority of capitalists: Nazism in Norway had never had any political importance. This fact is clearly illustrated by the failure of its leading exponent in Norway—Major Vidkun Quisling. This man, indeed, until his sensational reappearance after the German invasion, was generally regarded with pitying contempt. He had showed promise as a young man, and was employed by Dr. Nansen on relief work in Russia, and subsequently attached to the Norwegian Legation in Moscow, whence he returned to Norway an avowed Bolshevik. Failing to enlist the confidence of Norwegian Labour, he next changed his allegiance to the Agrarian Party, who made him Minister of Defence in the Government which they formed in 1931. An incident occurring at this time led to serious doubts as to his mental condition, and his general lack of balance has since been attributed by the charitable to the effects of malaria contracted in Russia. In 1933 he started an independent party in the closest imitation of Hitler's National Socialists, incorporating indeed the same initials in the title—'Nasjonal Samling' or National Union. The initials were in fact more descriptive than the name, since the only union which he effected was that of all other parties in the State against his own. In successive elections he failed consistently to obtain sufficient support to entitle his party to a single seat in the Storting.

### Attitude of the Belligerents

A further difference distinguishing the situation in 1939 from that of 1914 lay in the fact that, whereas on the earlier occasion neither side had desired to involve Norway in the war, Norwegian neutrality was, in 1939, unsatisfactory to both. It was early foreseen by Mr. Churchill that no declaration of neutrality would keep Hitler from extending the war to any country whenever it suited his purpose, and control of Norway would bring him a strategic advantage in at least two ways: by subjecting Sweden to the pressure of virtual encirclement, and by providing Germany with a greatly extended base of operations against Great Britain and her sea-borne supplies. Meanwhile, our economic warfare was severely handicapped through the existence of a continuous navigable highway of some 800 miles through Norwegian territorial waters. This protection the ships serving Germany were permitted to enjoy, in spite of the fact that they were all the time flagrantly disregarding international law by their attacks upon neutral shipping. Mr. Churchill, therefore, made no secret of his dislike of Norway's reliance on a neutrality which was unlikely to provide her with a permanent safeguard. In a broadcast speech on January 20, 1940, he issued a prophetic warning of the futility of such reliance.

'All hope that the storm will pass before their turn comes to be devoured. But the storm will not pass. It will rage and roar, ever more loudly—ever more widely. It will spread to the South. *It will spread to the North.* There is no chance of a speedy end except through united action.'

Between two belligerents, one of whom could be relied on to leave Norway free to determine her own policy while the other could not, the application of a

policy of neutrality became increasingly one-sided. Eventually, therefore, on April 8, 1940, the British and French Governments announced that they had taken steps to interfere with a privilege which Germany had ceased to deserve, by laying mines at certain defined points within Norwegian territorial waters.

### The German Invasion

It is abundantly clear that before this date Hitler had determined to put into effect the strategic plans which he had long prepared and which he has since carried through successfully.

The invasion of Denmark and Norway, which took place on April 9, showed clear signs of long and careful preparation. The troops selected for the operation had been chosen from men familiar with Norway and the Norwegian language. A number of them were Austrians to whom, as children, the Norwegians had given hospitality in the hard times following the previous Great War. The operation itself must have started before the allied mine-laying which was its ostensible pretext. During the night of April 8-9, German forces effected the occupation of all the principal Norwegian ports, including Trondheim and Narvik, points which it was physically impossible to reach within the time which had elapsed after the British operation in Norwegian territorial waters had taken place. Earlier than this, there had been significant indications of what was in the wind. About the middle of March a Norwegian fishing skipper, meeting a German U-boat just outside territorial waters, was informed by her commander that submarines would soon be as numerous as fishing boats off the Norwegian coast, and a few days later a U-boat actually stranded in a small inlet, and was interned. Particular significance can now be seen to attach to a

careful and comprehensive reconnaissance carried out by a German aeroplane on April 4, embracing the greater part of the western coastal districts of Norway, from Haugesund to the head of the Trondheim fjord inclusive. A final straw in the wind, which like other indications failed to arouse suspicion at the time, was connected with Quisling's Nazi organ, *Fritt Folk*. This paper, which had been long reduced by lack of public support from a daily to a weekly publication, developed, a short time before the invasion, a mysterious and inexplicable prosperity, and resumed, at the end of March, its original form as a daily. Such indications as these, however, are naturally easier to interpret after the event, and in fact the German invasion came as a complete surprise, while the confusion was increased by its coincidence in time with the action taken by Great Britain in Norwegian waters.

It is necessary to emphasize, in view of a contrary impression which still prevails in certain quarters, the important part played by confusion in the situation, and the negligible influence of deliberate treachery. The name of Quisling had an unfortunate fascination for British and foreign journalists, and has since been added to the vocabulary of most languages, including German, as a synonym for a particular kind of traitor. Hence an impression was created, which has since proved most difficult to eradicate, that the kind of 'fifth column' activity associated with this form of treason was particularly widespread in Norway. This false impression is even reported to have led to an unfortunate distrust, on the part of the Allies in the campaign, of intelligence reaching them from Norwegian military sources, and a disinclination to engage in frank consultations. The notion, however, that Quisling was in any way a typical or influential figure

is the precise opposite of the truth. His influence was negligible, his treason very nearly unique, and in fact the support which Hitler insisted on bestowing on this crazed, despised, and solitary personality played an important and even perhaps a decisive part in stiffening resistance against the invaders.

Norwegians, in fact, have earned a credit which so far has not sufficiently been realized for the toughness of the resistance which they displayed in a singularly desperate situation. All their arsenals, military stores, aerodromes and mobilisation centres, except in the remote north, fell at once under German control: Germany, in possession of the radio, was in a position to increase the confusion which in any case must have prevailed; qualified military opinion for the most part regarded the position as hopeless, and it needed rare courage and determination to fight a series of delaying actions with improvised and ill-equipped forces, in the hope of playing out time till the arrival of reinforcements from the Allies. General Ruge, who commanded this forlorn hope, has drawn a vivid picture of the way in which the forces used were formed by individuals, who escaped from the capital, coalesced into larger units, and thus carried on the unequal struggle with epic courage and determination. In spite of the early loss of the whole of southern Norway, this struggle was maintained for some three months; hope was never abandoned, and the eventual defeat reflects no shadow of discredit on the Norwegians themselves, being attributable to the inevitable withdrawal of allied support, rendered necessary by developments in other fields, and in particular by the unexpected and disastrous collapse of France.

### The German Occupation

The withdrawal of the King and the Government from Norway, with the unanimous sanction of the Storting, removed out of reach of German control the only administration which could claim constitutional authority; so long as this remained in being, it was impossible for the conquerors to substitute, with any pretence of legality, an alternative puppet régime to serve as their tools, or to claim international recognition for it. Nor could they claim that such an alternative was rendered practically necessary if the day-to-day tasks of internal administration were to be carried on; since for such purposes an Administrative Council had been early set up, on the motion of the Norwegian Supreme Court of Justice, composed of individuals of undoubted loyalty, whose work was recognized and appreciated by the King, but who did not claim in any way to supplant the constitutional Government. The latter remained in being, recognized by the world at large as the sovereign power of Norway. In these circumstances, the efforts of the Germans were directed to the removal of this obstacle, either by voluntary abdication or by the more questionable expedient of a vote of the Storting, though the latter, in the circumstances, could not have been convincingly represented to be an expression of the free will of the Norwegian people. To secure their ends, two main attempts were made, in June and in September. On the first occasion, which was adroitly chosen at the moment when the collapse of French resistance had reduced the hopes of Norway to the lowest ebb, a combination of threats and trickery induced the Presidential Board of the Storting, a body without legislative or constitutional authority, to write to the King requesting his abdication, for himself and

his family, and the resignation of the elected Government. The members of this board were also prevailed on to sign a pledge that they would endeavour to secure Parliamentary support for the deposition of the King and the removal of the existing Government, if a voluntary abdication proved unobtainable. After the King had replied to this request by a dignified and reasoned refusal, a lull ensued for some months, during which the spirit of the nation had an opportunity of rallying, and of declaring itself emphatically against the proposal. In this situation, when the Germans renewed their political offensive in September, with the object of obtaining the endorsement of their demands by the Storting, the negotiations broke down before being placed before that assembly, which would in any case have been practically certain to have rejected the proposals. On September 25, therefore, Terboven, the Reichskommissar, issued decrees on his own authority, abolishing all political parties in Norway, with the exception of Quisling's Nasjonal Samling, and appointing a number of his own nominees from that faction to take charge, under German control, of the various Ministerial Departments of State. This cutting of the Gordian knot, which could claim, of course, no shadow of constitutional authority, has served only to exacerbate the public opinion of the country to a hostility towards the puppets and their masters, which, at the time of writing, shows signs of reaching a dangerous intensity. Even more effective than the spontaneous hostility shown by the general public have been such manifestations of responsible disapproval as were shown in the resignation of the Norwegian Supreme Court in December 1940, and in the pastoral letter circulated by the Bishops of Norway to their congregations in February of this year. But, however manifested, the

irreconcilable and courageous opposition of the Norwegian people to their German oppressors and the traitors who serve them has won the admiration of all free peoples who have had occasion to follow developments in this and other occupied countries.

The experience of the present war seems to be producing a certain reorientation in the sphere of Norwegian foreign policy. Isolated neutrality and Scandinavian collaboration have both been found to provide insufficient security in time of trouble. The wider co-operation envisaged in the League of Nations has also been found wanting, perhaps because it was too wide to be linked by a bond of real community of interest. There are signs that the statesmen of Norway are inclined to look in a fresh direction for the support which their country is seen to require. In a striking speech delivered in December 1940, the present Foreign Minister, Mr. Tryggve Lie, suggested that Norway, while not ignoring the claims of Scandinavian kinship, or the help of any of the free peoples of Europe, should look mainly to and across the ocean. As an Atlantic and seafaring nation, for whom inclusion in a Teutonic continental bloc meant nothing but economic ruin and political subordination, Norway should look for help and collaboration mainly to the free nations overseas—the British Empire and the United States of America. Such an orientation seems indeed to promise an association peculiarly congenial to the spirit of Norway, in which her salient characteristics would find free scope for development.

